



A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

**LOOK UP AND SEE
YOUR SAVIOR'S FACE**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Church of Jesus Christ is on a journey to build the kingdom of God. Each of us is a party to His plan as it unfolds. On the day of our baptism, we each promised to dedicate ourselves to His gospel and His cause. We understand that we are called to take active roles in fulfilling the plan of God as briefly articulated in the *Purpose, Mission, and Vision** of the Church. There should be no other interest or activism that dilutes our dedication to the cause of Christ and the fellowship of His Church.

Spiritual development has been compared to a baby who starts on a diet of milk and, with growth, graduates to meat. So growing to spiritual maturity is pretty much accepted as a gradual process in each member's life. But there is clear and present urgency: Resolving the divisions among us. We find division in our discussions, in our social media and other communications. We are seeing that taking up causes or movements, politics, and distractions are pulling our eyes away from Jesus. We are even being torn by variance in dealing with the pandemic. We know from scriptures that the difficulties of our times have been prophesied and should be expected to increase while God also works with the Church and with His covenant people to gather the repentant and cast off the unbelievers. Unity among the saints is essential; however, we are hearing of disunity as members align with other philosophies and organizations, hurtfully condemning other members who are not so aligned. While the Apostles have been concerned about the development of these contentious expressions, emotions, and activities, an experience was submitted to the Quorum of Apostles and accepted as God's revelation to the Church. God confirmed our concerns and prescribed the resolution: Look up and see our Savior's face.

Experience 9-28-20

I was praying for The Church of Jesus Christ. Specifically, for the division that seems to be entering into our congregations generally. Members have different viewpoints, especially regarding politics and current events. There is an argumentative attitude that seems to be entering in amongst us, causing our own members to have negative feelings towards each other. While praying for our Church in this manner, I had a vision:

In the vision, I saw the auditorium of the conference center. There were members of the church seated in the left and right sections of the seats. The center section was

open. Both groups, which consisted of members and priesthood, were arguing and yelling back and forth towards each other. There was what I could see to be an invisible wall between them. As they continued to argue, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the center of the room above the invisible wall. The members and priesthood then realized the Lord was there. They stopped arguing and looked up at the Lord. As they looked up, the Lord extended His hand and the invisible wall fell down. The vision then ended and immediately the Gift of Tongues came forth followed by the Word of the Lord stating: "If all look to Me, they will not see their differences. They will see My love, My love, My love, thus saith the Lord."

Of course, every member of the Church wants to believe he/she is looking to Jesus. However, God reveals that we need to check up on ourselves. Are we really looking to Jesus, or are we looking at each other or elsewhere—judging, demanding, criticizing? Are we allowing ourselves to become separated? God tells us: "If all look to me, they will not see their differences. They will see My love." The Apostle Paul wrote: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

In the history of God's people, there have been other journeys impacted by lack of unity in the Lord. During the Israelite journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, God was provoked many times by the complaints of His people as they spoke against Moses—effectively speaking against Him. At one point, God sent fiery, poisonous serpents to straiten His people. As they were bitten and dying, they were humbled and asked Moses to pray to God to take away the serpents. God did not immediately remove the serpents but told Moses to make a fiery serpent of brass and set it upon a pole, and anyone who was bitten could look upon it and live. Around 850 years later, during the journey from Jerusalem to this Promised Land, disunity disrupted again. Nephi referred to the journey of the Israelites, comparing the hardened hearts of his brothers to the Israelites. He said that, while the simple act of looking at the brass serpent was sufficient to overcome the serpents' venom, many refused to look and died instead. They died! Almost 600 years later, another Nephi explained that God intended the brass serpent on the pole as a model of Christ who would soon come and would be lifted up to be looked upon in order to receive salvation (Numbers 21:4-9; 1 Nephi 17:40-41; Helaman 8:13-15). The physical urgency in Moses' time became a spiritual urgency in Nephi's time and continues today. Christ is to be lifted up and looked upon. Simple yes, but can we do it? What can stop us?

Unity and Righteousness are key elements in the Vision of the Church. They are called out as the attributes of God's people that will render Satan powerless over the hearts of men (1 Nephi 22: 26-28). Only as we ALL look to Christ—keeping our eyes, our minds, our thoughts, our hopes, upon Jesus—will we be united IN HIS LOVE. Division among us is equivalent to the venom of the serpents. Therefore, looking to Jesus—truly and consistently—is urgent to fulfilling our Vision. The urgency is this: Failure to fulfill that Vision leaves us outside of the gathering of the righteous.

Consistent with Paul's exclamation, we must be persuaded that there is no other entity or cause that can be allowed to take precedence over the fellowship we have in Christ. Yes, there are many problems, conflicts, and inequities in the world today. Superficially, we might be led to believe that one organization or another has answers to these issues, but as the faithful in Christ, we must understand and trust that they can only be resolved as mankind turns to Him. No ideology, political movement, no cause, no force of might can be allowed to take our eyes off of Christ or to separate

us from His love. Ideally, it might be best not to join ourselves to any of them, especially as most movements include both acceptable and unacceptable aspects. However, it could be reasonable to find some of those acceptable aspects worthy of agreement. In any case, while we participate in society—voting, etc.—let us be sure to avoid any of these things rising above our fellowship in the Gospel or becoming criteria by which to judge one another. A recent experience was submitted to the Apostles and has been accepted as revelation to the Church confirming our understanding that God sees every soul as equal, and He assures that conflicts and contentions will not be part of His kingdom.

Experience 7-19-20

This afternoon I was praying for an upcoming call with some brothers to discuss race and relations within our church. I know this is a subject that can be very sensitive. I felt compelled to pray that God would bless our call and lead us so that we could find ourselves drawing closer to Him and closer to each other.

While in prayer, the Gift of Tongues came forth followed by the Word of the Lord stating: “Thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Father: the One who sees all His creation, the One who sits on high and looks down and sees all the same for they are born of His love, and they are born of My image; all male, all female, all races, all color, all creeds, all born, all born to be sons and daughters of the Most High! Yes now, you must live under the banner of My Son, Jesus Christ, and that standard, that standard, that standard must reign above all! For when contention comes, for the differences that you see amongst each other, if your hearts are focused and your spirit has accepted the teachings of My Son Jesus Christ, and you have the love, the love, the love reigning in your heart, the love of My Son, then now, those contentions, those contentions will not be! For conflict will not exist within the realm of the love of My Son, Jesus Christ! Conflict will not exist on that mountain that I have prepared! For it is My mountain and it is My place that I will bring all My believers unto; those of My creation who choose, who choose to accept the ways presented before them through the teachings of Jesus Christ My Son! So now, My sons and daughters, today look not upon yourselves, look not upon your skin, but look now within your heart! And does that heart reflect the image of My Son? Do you have love or has hatred made its way in? For if it has, if it has now, seek Me in all sincerity and through seeking Me, you will see now how My spirit will befall you and it will release you of the hurt! It will release you of the pain! And it will allow you to see with My eyes, see with My eyes, see with My eyes what I see. For I see all equally created, equally created under My name, under My name! Consider this now, consider this now that you may know and you may find peace in your time, thus saith the Lord!”

As this experience emphasizes the equality of all mankind in the eyes of God, we understand that we must see with the eyes of Christ in order to love as He does and to be released from the pains imposed by society. If we have allowed animosity to become part of our thoughts and communications, we should know that we are not seeing with the eyes of Christ nor are we keeping our eyes upon Him. The Apostle Peter wrote that we have been given great and precious promises whereby we can be partakers of the divine nature (i.e., the nature of God) having escaped the corruption that is in the world. He urges us to give all diligence...”add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to

patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity...he that lacketh these things is blind...and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Peter 1:4-9).

We must build upon our conversion to acquire and cling to charity—the pure love of God, the love that God demonstrated in sending His only begotten Son to save us, the love that Christ demonstrated as He went to the cross for us. Moroni entreats us to “pray unto the Father with all energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ...” (Moroni 7:47-48).

There is a *Song of Zion* that can be applied. Number 15, “Descending the Stairs.” The chorus says:

*Look up and see your Saviour’s face,
His hands held out; Amazing grace.
That sword-pierced side, ‘twas all for you.
Look up and live your life anew.*

Let us unite as the Saints of God, The Church of Jesus Christ, true followers of Christ. Look up to the Lord and see His love.

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, John Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Lovalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

***PURPOSE, MISSION, VISION**

Our Purpose

To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people

Our Mission

The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the restored Gospel to all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America.

Our Vision

Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God’s Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ’s promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.

To learn more about *The Church of Jesus Christ*, with Headquarters in Monongahela, PA, please visit our website. The World Operations Center for world-wide missionary efforts is in Greensburg, PA.

www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org